

VZCZCXRO6834  
PP RUEHGR  
DE RUEHKG #0538/01 1631658  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 111658Z JUN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6455  
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0477  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2301  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0048  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0133  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KINGSTON 000538

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/CAR - JOE TILGHMAN  
INL/LP - NATALIA BOZZOLO  
TREASURY FOR ERIN NEPHEW

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNARPGOVPRELPHUMSOCIASECKCRMUNDPJMXL](#)

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: HEADS OF KEY DONOR COUNTRY MISSIONS DISCUSS  
DETERIORATING CRIME AND VIOLENCE SITUATION

REF: (A) KINGSTON 513 (061451Z JUN 08)(NOTAL)

(B) KINGSTON 421 (131527Z MAY 08)(NOTAL)  
(C) KINGSTON 228 (141150Z MAR 08)(NOTAL)  
(D) KINGSTON 457 (212044Z MAY 08)(NOTAL)  
(E) KINGSTON 417 (NOTAL)

¶1. (SBU): Summary: At a June 10 breakfast hosted by UNDP representative Minh Pham to discuss the deteriorating crime and violence situation in Jamaica, heads of key donor country missions and UN agencies agreed that the international community in Jamaica should support Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Commissioner Lewin, the Police Strategic Review (PSR), and a bipartisan approach to fighting crime. As a next step, the key partners intend jointly to approach new cabinet secretary Douglas Saunders in the near future to discuss how the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) might better plan and coordinate its efforts in the areas of crime and justice. The UK High Commissioner said Jamaica is at a "tipping point," where the window of opportunity for meaningful reforms created when the new government was elected last year may begin to close if progress is not forthcoming soon on key crime and justice matters. The Canadian High Commissioner cited GOJ capacity deficiencies, and joined the UNICEF Representative in expressing alarm that participation by under-aged youth in criminal gangs in Jamaica's "garrison" communities amounts to virtual "child soldiery." UNICEF urged more attention to keeping guns out of the hands of children. The European Commission acting representative noted that the GoJ will likely allocate most of the 33 million Euro package of budget support for crime and justice to crime fighting, because justice reform efforts are lagging under the new government. The Canadian development cooperation counselor complained that the GOJ lacked "a vision for justice reform." The UNDP representative said Commissioner Lewin's recent decision to resign (subsequently withdrawn) arose because of lack of support from a significant faction within the ruling Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). The U.S. offered to host an informal coordination meeting for countries and organizations providing crime and justice assistance to Jamaica on June 25. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Alarmed at the spiraling rates of murder and violence in Jamaica (Ref A), and the political crisis occasioned by the recent tendering and withdrawal of JCF Commissioner Hardley Lewin, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Representative Minh Pham organized an informal breakfast June 10 for key heads of Mission and delegation in Kingston to assess the situation and possible joint steps. Attending the breakfast were UK High Commissioner Jeremy Cresswell, U.S. CDA James Heg, Canadian High Commissioner Denis Kingsley, UNICEF Representative Bertrand Bainvel, European Commission acting Representative Helen Jenkinson, and Canadian Development Cooperation Counselor Lorraine Blisle. Pham began

with reference to the high murder rate in Jamaica, currently running at about 7 victims per day, or about 1400 per year. He called the situation "conflict without war" and said the rate of fatality on a per capita basis exceeds that in some international conflict countries that receive much greater attention from the international community. Pham referred to the recent crisis over the police commissioner's resignation, and expressed concern that the newly released report on the Police Strategic Review (PSR) would be "politicized." He then requested brief presentations by the attendees.

13. (SBU) Creswell (UK) said Jamaica was at a crucial juncture now, a "tipping point." The JLP assumption of power last September after 18 years of increasingly "tired" rule by the People's National Party (PNP) was seen as a big opportunity to turn things around in Jamaica. Now the question was "whether the window of opportunity is closing." Lewin's withdrawal of his resignation was met with relief. The PSR represented a "real opportunity for change," and was not just another bureaucratic study. Cresswell said the private sector will have to play a key role in overcoming Jamaica's current crisis and in reforming the police force. CDA Heg (U.S.) echoed Cresswell's overall assessment. He cited the JLP's difficulty in managing a GOJ bureaucracy shaped by 18 years of PNP rule, and the pervasiveness of corruption, as well as some unfortunate personnel choices, particularly the initial JLP selection for Minister of National Security (Ref B). The CDA also called for support for Lewin and the PSR, and offered to have the U.S. Embassy host a June 25 meeting to coordinate and share information about assistance programs in crime and security, similar to our February meeting of the Counter-terrorism Working Group (CWIG) (Ref C).

14. (SBU) Kingsley (Canada) supported the points made by the U.S.

KINGSTON 00000538 002 OF 003

and UK. He underlined that Jamaica lacked the resources and capacity to come to grips with the many challenges it faced in crime and justice. Kingsley noted that 60 percent of the crime in Toronto can be traced to ethnic Jamaicans, only 5 percent of the city's population, and for that reason Canada's police were very interested in Jamaica. Canadian assistance rules made it difficult to provide direct aid to policing, but assistance was possible if there were a clear governance angle. Kingsley opined that Jamaica's "garrison situation was a war and children were being used as soldiers." Bainvel (UNICEF) continued that Jamaica's situation was "the most critical of the past five years" due not only to soaring crime but also rapid price increases and the real possibility of another general election. He called the situation of children subject to violence "critical" and called for action to pass legislation to restrict access to weapons by children. "Social interventions" were needed to accompany measures to strengthen the police.

15. (SBU) Jenkinson (EC) described how her organization intended to provide 33 million euros in budget support to the GOJ to be used in the areas of security and justice. In practice, this would mostly go to security because, while there was a plan on paper (the PSR) to reform the police, the JLP government had done little on justice reform since taking office last year. The pace of EC disbursements would depend first on the GOJ's stated priorities (due to be produced by the end of this month) and on actual achievements. Jenkinson noted continued problems in sorting out the role of the Ministry of National Security (MNS), and the continued presence of obstructionist holdover bureaucrats such as Ann-Marie Barnes in that organization. She added that little could be accomplished on security in Jamaica without programs to generate more employment on the island. Blisle (Canada) said her government would examine the PSR report and "perhaps could find creative ways" to support it. Canada's main goal remained to support justice reform. In that regard, she noted that Justice Minister Lightbourne "was still not getting along" with her Permanent Secretary. Overall, the GOJ "lacks a vision" for justice reform, according to Blisle. Nevertheless, Canada had begun implementing some aspects of the program, notably a review of the role of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). She called for closer cooperation between MNS and Justice within the GOJ.

¶6. (SBU) Pham expressed agreement with what everyone had said. He gave his own understanding of why Lewin had threatened to resign. A "certain group" within the JLP saw the apolitical Lewin as "not good" for "the type of gloves-off campaign" the JLP would have to run if another general election became necessary. Prominent hotelier Butch Stewart, a key member of this group, reportedly overruled the editorial board of his Observer newspaper in running the June 1 editorial calling for Lewin to be replaced. Overall, Lewin sensed a lack of political support for his efforts at the JCF.

According to Pham, who recently dined with the Prime Minister, Golding himself was displeased with Lewin's initial performance, due to the lack of results in Lewin's fight against high level police corruption, and his failure to produce a budget or set of resource requirements for JCF reform. In the end, Lewin was "saved by support from the public and from NGOs." Pham said the PSR report contained a "well costed out" technical assistance component of U.S. \$ 8 million over three years. The major donors needed to "demonstrate our joint support" for the PSR action plan, and to ensure that it was on the agenda for the upcoming Vale Royal talks between the JLP and the PNP. Pham worried that a new general election would lead directly to a "greatly deteriorated" security situation in Jamaica.

¶7. (SBU) Cresswell added his support to the importance of reforming Jamaica's justice system along with the police. Lewin alone could not carry the PSR forward. The private sector and the media and the Prime Minister would have to get on board as well. Cresswell mused that another problem for donors was whether to follow a broad or a narrow approach in rendering assistance to Jamaica. He worried that, in the past, assistance had been spread too thin across too many areas. CDA Heg noted in this regard that Jamaica's recent reengagement with the multilateral development banks (Ref C) was a positive development. Now, bilateral donors need not try to do everything here, and might concentrate more on areas such as security where they had a comparative advantage. Kingsley urged joint action "to help the government focus on a larger strategy." Cresswell said the June 24-25 scheduled meeting of the members of the PSR's panel of experts to discuss the status of implementation of the PSR's recommendations might provide the opportunity for

KINGSTON 00000538 003 OF 003

"positive developments."

¶8. (SBU) Pham concluded the breakfast with a read-out of his recent dinner discussion with Prime Minister Golding. He said the PM was concerned about four areas: (1) On security and justice, the need for institutional support and funding. In this regard, Pham said Golding attached importance to an assessment of the various community projects. How do we tease out the lessons on what works? (2) On debt management, the PM wanted different treatment from the international financial institutions for middle income high-debt countries like Jamaica. (3) On food security, Golding planned to bring together his different ministries to jointly tackle this challenge. (4) On disaster preparedness, Golding was concerned about a lack of rapid response capacity in Jamaica, "very low" stocks of relief supplies, and lack of capacity to perform damage assessments.

HEG